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AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE INDIAN OCEAN

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 432nd MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 12 July 1994, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. KALPAGE (Sri Lanka)

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- GENERAL DISCUSSION
- FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF NEW ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES
- FUTURE ROLE OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 48/82 OF 16 DECEMBER 1993 (continued):

- GENERAL DISCUSSION

- FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF NEW ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

- FUTURE ROLE OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE

1. Mr. ANSARI (India) welcomed the almost complete consensus on the continuing validity of the objectives laid down in the 1971 Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. Despite the end of the cold war, the foreign military presence in the region continued to have a destabilizing effect and should therefore be eliminated. The Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean should continue to focus on the search for alternative approaches to achieving the objectives of the 1971 Declaration, not alternative goals on which there was no consensus. That search must continue within the framework of the Committee, as any alternative methodology would detract from the Committee's importance. The importance of the cooperation and participation of the permanent members of the Security Council, the major maritime users and other interested States must be underlined, as it had been in the Committee's most recent report (A/48/29). His delegation therefore supported the proposal by the representative of Sri Lanka that the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee should consult with the non-participating permanent members of the Security Council and other major maritime users of the Indian Ocean with a view to encouraging their full participation in the Committee's deliberations. Without the participation of all the permanent members of the Security Council and the major maritime users, the Committee would fail in its efforts to find new ways of ensuring peace, security and stability in the Indian Ocean region that were responsive to the changed international situation and consistent with the long-standing objectives of the Committee.

2. Mr. MUTHAURA (Kenya) said that his delegation was aware that the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace might contain references which were reminiscent of the cold war era. Nevertheless, the main goals remained valid and simply needed to be reinterpreted more liberally and pragmatically to reflect current international conditions. The improvement in the international political climate had provided new opportunities for strengthening international and regional peace, security and stability as well as new opportunities for the littoral and hinterland States, the permanent members of the Security Council and the major maritime users to work together on the task of considering new approaches to achieving the goals contained in the Declaration. To that end, the Committee should develop a programme of work based on a step-by-step approach which would encourage the participation of all members of the Ad Hoc Committee. The experience of the negotiations on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea had shown that countries which had some initial reservations tended to be brought in at a later stage. Full participation and dialogue would be effective in building confidence in the region. Kenya believed that the development of regional cooperation not only in

the military and political fields but also in the socio-economic, scientific, environmental and other spheres should be envisaged, while bearing in mind the arrangements agreed upon under the Law of the Sea Convention, Agenda 21, the Indian Ocean Marine Affairs Cooperation Council (IOMAC) and other ongoing cooperation arrangements.

3. Mr. NKURLU (United Republic of Tanzania), after reviewing the history of the Indian Ocean question, said that the littoral and hinterland States should be the major players in the process of charting new alternative approaches to achieving the objectives of the 1971 Declaration, since it was those States which felt insecure and unstable because of external military involvement in the region. It was in that light that his delegation reiterated its support for the convening of a further meeting of the littoral and hinterland States to review progress made since the 1979 Meeting, which had been a turning-point in efforts to create a zone of peace in the area. His delegation also supported the proposals put forward by some delegations to hold workshops or seminars which would bring together a cross section of people in their personal capacity, and subsequently an international conference including extraregional States to harmonize the views of all interested parties. Lastly, it welcomed the positive political developments in South Africa and the imminent entry into force of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which should be an inspiration to the Committee and encourage those who had left the Committee to return to it.

4. Mr. LWATULA (Zambia) said that the permanent members of the Security Council and the major maritime users of the Indian Ocean must be parties to the deliberations and decisions of the Ad Hoc Committee. He therefore appreciated the presence of the delegations of China and the Russian Federation and hoped that the delegations of France, the United States and the United Kingdom would soon rejoin them.

5. A new climate of international cooperation had replaced the rivalries of the cold war. Zambia therefore supported the proposal by the Australian delegation to constitute an expert group on the Indian Ocean to consider ways of persuading the three permanent members which had thus far taken no part in the Ad Hoc Committee's deliberations to participate in its work once again.

6. The Committee should also use all possible regional, continental and international forums to discuss ways of achieving its objectives.

7. Ms. MENON (Singapore) said that her delegation would give positive consideration to any reasonable, feasible new approaches presented by the States concerned which were conducive to the establishment of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace. That objective would require the efforts of States both within and outside the Indian Ocean region, who must base their relations with each other on mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-interference in internal affairs, equality, mutual benefit and peaceful coexistence. Her delegation reiterated the proposal it had made in 1993 that the Ad Hoc Committee should consider a treaty of amity and cooperation in the Indian Ocean as an interim, intermediate step. It also suggested that the countries of the region might consider signing non-aggression pacts with each other.

8. Mr. YASSIN (Sudan) said that the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council and other States that used the Indian Ocean was of paramount importance to the Committee's work. His delegation appreciated the proposals by the delegation of Sri Lanka contained in the report of the Secretary-General (A/49/203), particularly the idea of making the Ad Hoc Committee a forum for confidence-building among the littoral and hinterland States, since any regional arrangements to consolidate peace would no doubt benefit international peace.

9. His delegation also supported the proposal by Sri Lanka to convene a seminar of government experts to develop various approaches for cooperation in the region. Such forms of cooperation should be incorporated into political action in order to ensure the political will to implement them in a conference which his delegation believed was the ultimate forum for such work.

10. The CHAIRMAN said that besides his own introductory statement of 11 July 1994, 12 statements in all had been made at the present and the previous meetings. Since more than half of the Committee's members had attended the two meetings, it should be possible to hold an informal discussion on outstanding questions.

11. Most of the delegations that had spoken had done so along the lines of the consensus conclusions and recommendations contained in section III of the Committee's 1993 report (A/48/29). They had also been agreed that the permanent members of the Security Council and the major maritime users of the Indian Ocean should participate in the Committee's work.

12. As the representative of India had rightly pointed out, the Ad Hoc Committee had no need to look for new alternative goals, since its aim remained to bring peace, security and stability to the Indian Ocean region so that it could become a zone of peace. Having examined many different approaches to achieving that objective over the past 20 years, and taking into account the consensus which had emerged on many points among the different delegations, he intended to continue to look at new ways of bringing it about, particularly a step-by-step approach based on confidence which would facilitate the adoption, in successive stages, of global and regional steps in that direction.

13. He therefore proposed that the Committee should adjourn its meeting and reconvene informally to discuss the measures to be adopted. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Ad Hoc Committee agreed to his proposal.

14. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.

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AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE INDIAN OCEAN

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 433rd MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 13 July 1994, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. KALPAGE (Sri Lanka)

CONTENTS

IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 48/82 OF 16 DECEMBER 1993 (continued)

GENERAL DISCUSSION

FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF NEW ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

FUTURE ROLE OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE

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The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 48/82 OF 16 DECEMBER 1993 (continued)

GENERAL DISCUSSION

FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF NEW ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

FUTURE ROLE OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE

1. The CHAIRMAN said that, as requested at the end of the discussion at the previous meeting, he had drawn up a preliminary draft of conclusions and recommendations which would be considered during the informal consultations.

2. Mr. RAHIM (Bangladesh), recalling the mandate which had been conferred on the Committee by General Assembly resolution 48/82, said that his delegation had consistently supported both the initiative to declare the Indian Ocean a zone of peace and its major underlying objectives, namely: the creation of a neutral, demilitarized and denuclearized zone; the creation of an environment that would preserve and consolidate national independence and sovereignty; the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the United Nations Charter and international law; the strengthening of peace, security and stability in the world; and the convening of an international conference to study those problems.

3. Those objectives had originally been a response to threats posed to the region by super-Power rivalry and the arms race, as well as the possible risk of hegemony or domination by regional Powers. Recent unprecedented upheavals in international relations, however positive they were, had slowed down implementation of the Declaration and the convening of the international conference.

4. In that context, the onus had fallen upon the Ad Hoc Committee to restart that complex process, building upon past successes and the many positive aspects which had come out of recent developments. It could in particular build upon the significant progress made towards nuclear disarmament and the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, reduction in armaments and efforts made towards nuclear non-proliferation. Another favourable change was the stress placed today upon economic rather than military power, the advances in the resolution of regional conflicts, many of which concerned the Indian Ocean region, for example, the Middle East peace negotiations and the changes in South Africa. Further encouraging factors were the global fight against environmental degradation, drugs and terrorism, the possibilities for cooperation in terms of maritime activities and naval operations opened up by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the creation of Asian security strategies inspired by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and the movement towards regional association to encourage economic and political cooperation between Asian countries.

5. The Committee should concentrate its efforts on two goals. Firstly, it should consolidate the process of implementing the Declaration by using to its

(Mr. Rahim, Bangladesh)

advantage the consensus which had emerged over the past few years, and by encouraging the holding of informal workshops, meetings of groups of experts, regional and subregional seminars, as well as a second meeting of littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean with a view to the convening of an international conference.

6. Secondly, in order to more clearly define the substantive content of the goal of cooperation and peace, security and stability, the Committee would have to be careful to address the full range of military, economic and political problems - regional conflicts, nuclear and conventional disarmament, confidence-building measures, economic cooperation, marine resources management, fisheries, telecommunications, drug control, illegal arms transfer, etc. - while developing a sense of identity and community amongst all States in the region.

7. His delegation would support all those proposals, but would like to stress that the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council and the major maritime users of the Indian Ocean was an essential precondition for any progress towards peace and security in the region.

8. Mr. KHARRAZI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his country had for a long time been working towards peace, security and stability in the region of the Indian Ocean, and attached a great deal of importance to the work of the Ad Hoc Committee. The goals embodied in the 1971 Declaration remained valid for the most part. Although super-Power rivalries had given way to an era of confidence and cooperation, a foreign military presence still continued to threaten the security of States in the region.

9. His delegation considered that the Ad Hoc Committee should continue to consider new approaches, but needed to clarify the relationship between regional and universal initiatives. The most important of the confidence-building measures appropriate to the Indian Ocean region was the elimination of the foreign military presence, since in view of the positive developments in South Africa, Cambodia, Mozambique and Afghanistan, the end of the war between Iran and Iraq, and the ending of alignments created by the cold war, extraregional States no longer had any justification for keeping a presence in the region.

10. However, the realization of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace would be achieved gradually, and presupposed a sincere dialogue between the States concerned. The Ad Hoc Committee would have an important role to play as a multilateral forum, which would require the active participation of the permanent members of the Security Council and the major maritime users. However, it should be emphasized that progress in the Ad Hoc Committee should not necessarily be conditional upon their participation.

11. His delegation had already proposed that the Ad Hoc Committee should embark on a review of the 1971 Declaration, as some of its elements were no longer relevant, and should redefine the issues of security and stability in the light of post-cold-war developments. It had also suggested that the Secretary-General, with the help of experts, should undertake an in-depth study on the complex ramifications of the issues involved, particularly on the conceptual

(Mr. Kharrazi, Islamic Republic of Iran)

aspects of creating a zone of peace, in order to make recommendations on the measures and approaches necessary to achieve the goals of the 1971 Declaration. One of the objectives of that two-track policy could be a new declaration which would strike a realistic balance between the ideas, concerns, rights and responsibilities of regional and extraregional States.

12. Finally, his delegation hoped that the Ad Hoc Committee would present to the General Assembly a report which was as clear, concise and constructive as that of its previous session.

13. The CHAIRMAN, reviewing the main points of the Iranian representative's statement, said that it summarized perfectly the points of view expressed at the previous meeting.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.